Attaching a Stovepipe Baffle to Your Conduit Nest Box System

by John Harville

The metal stovepipe-type predator baffle has proven to be very effective in most areas of the country. It is usually a 6- to 8-inch-diameter cylinder made of galvanized sheet metal with a top that has a mounting collar to hold it firmly on the pole below the nest box. This baffle works because most raccoons and mammals that can shimmy up the pole cannot get their legs around the cylinder, nor can they dig their claws into the metal to get a grip to climb up it. Finally, the solid metal top with no gaps prevents snakes and smaller animals from climbing up the pole inside the baffle to get to the nest box.

Galvanized electrical conduit clamp connector

Installing the Baffle on the Pole

Note: The baffle is to be attached to the pole BEFORE attaching the nest box.

1. Put the conduit clamp connector—with the threaded end facing upward—onto the pole as close as possible to where the bottom of the nest box will be. (A low baffle enables a squirrel to jump to the top of the baffle and chew on the nest box.)

2. Tighten the two screws on the clamp connector so that it is level and tight on the pole.

3. Lower the baffle over the top of the pole so that the threaded part of the conduit clamp connector goes through the hole in the top of the baffle. You may have to rotate the baffle to “screw” it onto the collar. The baffle should rest on the collar with some sideways movement.

The baffle will flop around somewhat on top of the metal clamp connector. You want this, as it makes it more difficult for animals to hang onto the baffle as it moves around. If it moves around enough to hit the pole, and you do not want the bumping noise, you can stuff some steel wool or packing material up around the top of the baffle to cushion it.

Additionally, if you prefer that your baffle blend in with your landscape, you can paint your baffle and/or pole green or black with an exterior, rust-preventing paint such as Rust-Oleum®.

The MBS store is selling these baffles (clamp connector included) at today’s festival. For directions to make this same baffle yourself, go to our website: https://michiganbluebirds.org/images/stories/easygallery/downloads/MakeABaffleArticle.pdf

1/2” Conduit/Rebar Pole Mounting System

Designed by Steve Gilbertson, Aitkin, MN

This system has become the standard for mounting light to medium weight nestboxes. It uses readily available, affordable materials and is easy to install. When the conduit is polished with steel wool, coated with a quality paste wax and buffed smooth, the system is extremely resistant to climbing predators.

Tools

Large Hammer
Phillips head screwdriver
Work gloves
Safety glasses

Conduit

5 foot section 1/2” conduit (electrical metallic tubing, or EMT). Usually sold in 10 foot lengths. Most retailers will cut these to length for you.

1/2” Conduit Coupler

Longer screw for conduit coupler

The bottom coupler screw is tightened against the rebar to prevent the conduit from rotating. Because the screws supplied with the coupler are too short to reach the smaller diameter rebar, the bottom screw must be replaced with a slightly longer screw.

Rebar

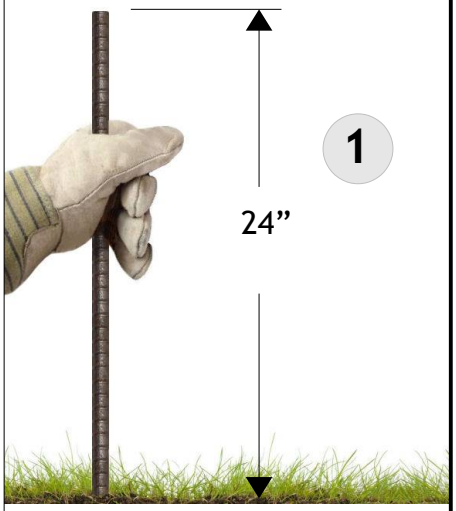
4 or 5 foot section 1/2” rebar. Use 4 foot for normal soils, 5 foot for loose or sandy soils.

Safety Precautions

Insure that no underground utilities are present where you plan to install this system. You could be injured if the metal rebar comes into contact with electrical cables, and you may be liable for any damages. Don't guess – *know!*

Wear gloves and eye protection

Step by Step



Use hammer to drive rebar into ground. Leave approximately 24” above ground.

Attach 1/2” EMT coupler to end of conduit. Tighten upper screw against conduit. Install longer screw in bottom but do not tighten.

Slip conduit/coupler assembly over rebar. Tighten bottom screw against rebar.